



Complete College Idaho: 2022 Update

Executive Summary

In the past ten years, Idaho post-secondary institutions have made significant strides with student retention, persistence, and graduation. These improvements are the result of substantial campus-level efforts to improve the course options for first-year students, develop proactive advising, increase student basic needs support, and remove sometimes-invisible barriers hindering student success. The individual campus efforts were strengthened and supported by the strategic, statewide [Complete College Idaho \(CCI\) plan](#) that was set forth a decade ago.

Idaho post-secondary institutions have made significant progress in nearly all areas, often under challenging circumstances. This report describes the history of the Complete College Idaho plan, documents the statewide success in most areas, and offers recommendations for the future.

CCA and CCI: A Brief Timeline

- 2010 Idaho joins the Complete College America (CCA) alliance.

- 2012 The State Board of Education releases the “[Complete College Idaho](#): A Plan for Growing Talent to Fuel Innovation and Economic Growth in the Gem State.” This plan includes goals for higher education related to transforming remediation (English and math), structuring for success (math pathways, advising, degree pathways), and rewarding retention and degree completion.

- 2012-2017 Each area of focus includes a wide range of initiatives, and most result in substantial system-wide improvements. Throughout this time, faculty and administrators from all eight institutions gather regularly to share resources, analyze data, and implement new curricular structures and student support programs.

- 2017 CCA’s Game Changers released:
 - 1. Structured Schedules

2. Corequisite Remediation
3. Math Pathways
4. GPS Direct (Meta-Majors, Academic Maps, and Advising)
5. #15 to Finish

October 2017	Governor Otter’s Higher Education Task Force recommends continued effort around college completion through full implementation of the CCA Game Changers. These strategies continue the efforts of earlier years; for example, corequisite remediation had been a specific focus beginning in 2012 – while others brought new energy to and support for initiatives around advising, scheduling, and setting credit enrollment expectations for students that would lead to on-time graduation.
2018-2022	Institutions continue implementing or deepening CCA Game Changer strategies, with varying focus and intensity depending on unique institutional contexts.
2021	CCA releases an updated Strategic Framework .
June 2022	Complete College Idaho Summit convenes.

Current Engagement with CCI Initiatives

In 2021, CCA realigned their organizational Strategic Framework around four conceptual Pillars: Structure, Purpose, Momentum, and Support. Each pillar includes numerous specific strategies, including the earlier Game Changers, while adding additional strategies to reflect a larger number of evidence-based approaches that enhance college completion.

In June 2022, provosts and other leaders of CCI initiatives from each Idaho institution convened at Idaho State University to offer updates on their institutions’ progress with the CCA Game Changers and share best practices. In addition to the institutional updates, participants were surveyed on the strategies in the new CCA Strategic Framework to gauge institutions’ familiarity with the broader set of strategies as well as their interest in each of these areas. While this data is impressionistic, it is heartening to see how many of the newer strategies are very familiar to the institutions. In many cases, these initiatives have been infused into the fabric of institutional strategic plans, providing evidence of the long-term staying power of these efforts.

This report offers an overview of the institutions’ progress with the 2017 Game Changers (bolded below) as well as with CCA’s expanded set of strategies.

Structure

The pillar of Structure includes several of the 2017 Game Changers: **Math Pathways**, an approach to

math instruction that moves away from a “College Algebra for all” approach to one that provides students with different entry-level math options depending on their major and career goals; **Meta-Majors**, and **Academic Maps**, both of which provide students with clear degree plans; and **Smart (or Structured) Schedules**. This pillar also includes Stackable Certificates, and while that was not one of the earlier Game Changers, it has been an area of interest and activity for the institutions for several years now.

At the summit, all institutions reported substantial implementation of Math Pathways, Meta-Majors, and Academic Maps. While there has been uneven implementation of Smart Scheduling and Stackable Certificates, there is a lot of interest in these areas, particularly around Certificates. Most institutions are currently engaged in purposefully developing appropriate certificate and microcredentialing options for their students. The following examples highlight how institutions have already developed Structural changes in nearly all of these areas¹.

Math Pathways²

“Math pathways” is a strategy designed to better align entry-level math with students’ majors. For example, historically, all college students have been required to take College Algebra, a course that is not appropriate for most non-STEM majors. In Idaho, nearly all institutions have made significant progress in adding entry-level, pathway-specific math courses. Most have developed courses for pre-education, liberal arts, and STEM majors; some have added other specialized gateway courses, like Boise State’s “Business Algebra” and ISU’s “Business Statistics.” Several community colleges have added program-specific math courses more appropriate for Associate degrees and technical certificates, such as CWI’s “Personal Finance” and “Technical Math” offerings.

Each institution continues to collect and assess student success data in these courses. Continued collaboration among college faculty, as well as with Idaho’s Math Transitions Network³, will bring better K-16 alignment in math instruction. While institutions can and should continue to strengthen their math pathways, in collaboration with faculty from across campus, math faculty should be commended for their attention to creating multiple new courses that better serve students.

¹ Structured (or Smart) Scheduling is supported by Idaho institutions, but other Game Changers were of higher impact and have received more focused attention. The institutions are sensitive to student needs and work to provide course offerings in a number of modalities; these efforts have only increased since the recent pandemic. Online Idaho will be another resource for students as they seek to complete coursework on time.

² Elizabeth Ganga and Amy Mazzarelio, “[Math Pathways: Expanding Options for Success in College Math](#),” *Education Commission of the States*, October 2018.

³ The Idaho Math Transitions Project is a Board-led collaboration between higher education math faculty and high school math teachers to improve alignment of mathematics courses and expectations, particularly at the transition from high school to college mathematics.

Meta-Majors and Degree Maps⁴

According to CCA’s findings, students are best served by a purposeful combination of flexibility and structure. **Meta-Majors** and **Degree Maps** offer students a variety of ways to understand and navigate their degree plans. For example, default program maps, preset schedules that allow students to opt out rather than opt in, four-year plans, flexible meta-majors for undecided students, and proactive advising are all designed to help students choose a major within their first year and to have clear progress milestones, each of which increases the likelihood of college completion.

At the June summit, representatives from each institution gave brief updates on progress on their implementation of **Meta-Majors** and **Degree Maps**. All institutions have implemented both strategies, and they have done so with nuanced, context-specific approaches while also sharing resources and ideas. For example, LCSC drew from CEI’s earlier work on meta-majors to, in turn, create their own set of these degree plans. Four-year plans are available for majors at the four year institutions; when combined with proactive advising and when built with on-time degree completion in mind, these tools can help students navigate their degree completion.

Purpose

CCA identifies four strategies within the pillar of Purpose: first-year experience, career exploration, academic and career alignment, and adult learning engagement. Even though none of these strategies are included in the 2017 Game Changers, the institutions did report on their adult learning programs at the June summit. Further, when surveyed, all of the institutional representatives identified these strategies as areas with which they are already actively engaged and for which they have developed programming. Two campuses identified these areas as their “highest priority,” four others identified that they are “currently working on these strategies,” and the remaining two are interested in learning more. The following examples highlight how institutions have already developed Purpose-driven efforts on their campuses.

Adult Learning Programs⁵

Institutions have all implemented strategies to engage adult learners through using a number of institution-specific approaches, from specific degree paths to flexible options to increasing opportunities for Prior Learning Assessments. For example, the College of Eastern Idaho was a finalist for the “Million Dollar Community College Challenge,” which is sponsored by the Lumina Foundation. This effort is designed to help community colleges tell their story to prospective students of all kinds,

⁴ Davis Jenkins, Hana Lahr, John Fink, Elizabeth Ganga, “What are We Learning About Guided Pathways: Part 3,” *Community College Research Center*, April 2018.

⁵ Ann E. Person, Julie Bruch, and Ashley Hong, “[How States and Institutions Can Work Together to Serve Adult Learners: Lessons From Adult Promise](#),” *Mathematica*, July 2021.

and CEI capitalized on this opportunity by creating marketing materials that welcome a broad range of students. CEI has also reimagined career services to better serve all students, but in particular, working adults.

Additionally, institutions have also made significant strides with increasing the available options for prior learning assessments that accelerate students' progress toward degree completion and/or that provide greater flexibility for working adults. For example, CWI has taken explicit steps to add PLA options for every course possible and is developing an AAS Leadership degree that includes up to 45 PLA credits. Boise State has revised their degree for working adults/degree completion into a comprehensive, integrated Interdisciplinary Professional Studies degree that includes stackable certificates and is fully online. They have also added an online degree program that engages distance learners in a lower-cost, simplified general education pathway as a way to access fully online degrees in a number of areas, from health care sciences to business and cybersecurity management.

Academic and Career Exploration and Alignment⁶

All institutions have strengthened various efforts to create clearer pathways to post-graduate life for students. For example, LCSC has created preset schedules for first-year students as well as a semester-long credit-bearing orientation that most students complete and that serves to orient students to degree planning and campus support. ISU's proactive advising tool, ISU Navigate, is directly integrated into the Career Center and provides students immediate access to relevant resources and career planning.

Many institutions are also developing specific, targeted programming around the first-year experience while also working on specific initiatives to improve retention to the second year of college, and while these strategies were not reported on in June, they are efforts that should be encouraged and amplified.

Momentum

The pillar of Momentum includes: Credit for Competency, Multiple Measures Placement, **Corequisite Support** (previously Corequisite Remediation), Dual Credit, and **15 to Finish**/Staying on Track. There has been sustained investment in the 2017 Game Changers and all of these strategies for many years at all Idaho institutions. Most of these initiatives were among the earliest ones that CCA supported, and so institutions report that they are "far" or "very far" along in implementation; they are collectively farthest along with dual credit. The brief descriptions below speak to the significant effort that institutions have put into these initiatives that help students gain access to credit-bearing

⁶ Catalina Covacevich, Anthony Mann, Filippo Besa, Jonathan Diaz, and Cristina Santos, "[Thinking about the future: Career readiness insights from national longitudinal surveys and from practice](#)," *OECD*, June 2021.

coursework and maintain momentum throughout their educational experience.

Corequisite Support^{7 8}

First-Year Writing: CCA has long advocated for corequisite entry-level writing coursework as a much more effective approach to “remediation” for entry-level college students. In first-year writing courses across Idaho, this curricular structure was quickly adopted, with some schools implementing corequisite courses as early as 2012. This became a rich area of professional development among the Idaho institutions, and as faculty in first-year writing mentored and supported each other through workshops and campus visits, all institutions decided to move to corequisite approaches within a few years. Idaho’s configuration of successful credit-bearing first-year writing courses that support student learning, and that were developed collaboratively across institution types, has brought national attention and acclaim.

Non-credit bearing, remedial courses for first-year writing are no longer offered at any public postsecondary institution in Idaho. Instead, English 101 is offered in a select number of corequisite modalities (the support class/credits may be taught by a different instructor, for example, or include Writing Center visits). This corequisite English course, ENGL 101 Plus, is offered in either 4-credit or 5-credit (some community colleges) packages. Importantly, all of these credits count toward general education and/or graduation, thus supporting students in an on-time graduation⁹.

Entry-level Math: Entry-level math courses have also long been an area of focus and attention for first-year math educators in Idaho. Math program coordinators have worked tirelessly over the past ten years as they reduced the number of non-credit bearing courses, transitioned to corequisite models, explored ways to improve the emporium approach, and continuously gathered data and reflected on that data. These reforms have been implemented in a variety of ways.

All institutions have reduced the number of non-credit bearing (remedial) courses and most have made significant progress on increasing the number of students who begin in credit-bearing coursework. For example, Boise State has transitioned from two pre-general education-level classes (025 and 108) to one (103 Mathematics Transitions for Success). Additionally, students within one course may be accelerated to the next class, even within the same semester. They are provided co-requisite,

⁷ [“No Room for Doubt,”](#) *Complete College America*, 2021

⁸ A.W. Logue, Daniel Douglas, and Mari Wanatabe-Rose, [“Corequisite Mathematics Remediation: Results Over Time and in Different Contexts,”](#) *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 41.3, 2019.

⁹ Students who enroll in ENGL 101 Plus have similar pass rates to those who begin in ENGL 102. Further, they also complete ENGL 102 at similar rates as those who begin in ENGL 101. This is notable in that this effect is seen across institutions: students who may otherwise be at some kind of academic risk are succeeding and continuing to make academic progress. The significant increases in success rates for students in first-year writing classes have had a direct impact on the improving retention rates at almost all institutions.

embedded support as needed. As another example, ISU has added a corequisite option; students are completing the course at satisfactory rates, and fewer students are being placed into the developmental course to begin with.

Corequisite uptake in mathematics has not been uniform, but several institutions are newly committed to moving as many students as possible into credit-bearing, co-requisite supported mathematics courses. Some institutions, like College of Eastern Idaho, only offer corequisite math, while others are continuing to move toward corequisite offerings. North Idaho College, for example, is working to develop and implement corequisite options within its three math pathways, with full implementation planned for fall 2024.

These efforts are paying off; when it is fully implemented, success rates have increased in both corequisite and subsequent math courses. The vast majority of Idaho students will be best served by placement approaches that place students into general education mathematics courses, with well-designed corequisite approaches providing support for students at the time of need.

Think 30/#15 to Finish^{10 11}

CCA promotes a number of completion strategies that have been demonstrated to encourage on-time student graduation. **#15 to Finish** is a part of the 2017 Game Changers, as is its related approach, “Think 30.” These strategies encourage students to complete 30 credits each year or 15 credits each semester to remain on track for degree completion. Of note is that another related strategy for on-time completion – completing gateway Math and English courses in the first year – has already been infused into the institutional practices of Idaho institutions. All have integrated prerequisites into subsequent courses and other strategies for requiring students to complete these courses in their first year, if not their first semesters.

The Think 30 and Fifteen to Finish initiatives have been adopted by all of the institutions at both the institutional level and more specifically within advising and orientation offices. At several institutions, for example, an “On time, On track. Think 30” marketing campaign has been integrated into registration presentations for new and prospective students. The other institutions have added it to advising modules, prospective student presentations, and broader on-campus marketing initiatives.

The institutions have also recognized the importance of all of these Momentum-focused strategies as part of their larger commitments to increasing student attendance, persistence, and graduation. At the

¹⁰ Meredith Kolodner, “[6 Reasons You Might Not Graduate On Time \(and What to Do About it\)](#),” *New York Times*, April 6 2017.

¹¹ Doug Shapiro, Afet Dundar, Phoebe Khasiala Wakhungu, Xin Yuan, Angel Nathan, Youngsik Hwang, [Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Attainment Rates](#) (Signature Report No. 12a), *National Student Clearinghouse Research Center*, March 2017.

College of Western Idaho, for example, leadership has identified first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention as an institutional priority. To that end, they have designed interventions to better support full-time students. For example, student credit loads are flagged and included in advising reports for added context for both students and advisors. Additionally, they have added an Advising Hub module within their LMS which guides students through a process designed to help them calculate their credit load for each semester. In a similar vein, Lewis-Clark State College has set specific targets for the increase in full-time students, and they are using a variety of approaches to encourage students to attend and be successful with a full-time schedule, including adding 30 credits/year as a criterion for merit-based scholarships.

Support

The pillar of Support includes strategies related to **Proactive Advising** and Student Support, 360 degree Coaching, and Student Basic Needs. At the June summit, institutions report high levels of interest and implementation in all areas, but particularly in active academic support and proactive advising. Participants also reported that all institutions have implemented these strategies and are still engaged with them; all eight institutions listed them as either “high priority” or “working on this strategy right now.” Students’ basic needs, which includes mental health needs, are an especially high priority for institutions as demand rose in these areas during the pandemic and has remained high since then. For example, institutions now have food pantries and micro-grants for short term emergency loans, and most are actively exploring ways to reduce or eliminate financial holds on transcripts. The following description of efforts around the 2017 Game Changer of Proactive Advising speaks to how this strategy has been integrated at the institutions.

Proactive Advising¹²

All institutions have enhanced advising, recognizing that wrap-around support is critically important for helping students stay on track and gain momentum. Institutions have increased the ways in which they advise, coach, and mentor students, from refining and targeting specific kinds of advising (enrollment specialists and student success advisors at CSI), to adding specialized advisors (Health Sciences advisors at ISU), to enhancing new student orientation (ISU).

Further, institutions have taken numerous notable and innovative steps to continuously improve how students find and work with advisors. Boise State is adding a mobile advising appointment booking app, for example, and ISU has expanded their pilot of EAB/Navigate to proactively engage struggling students before it’s too late and to increase advising opportunities. Each institution is continuing to

¹² Jennifer Varney, [Intrusive advising](#). *Academic Advising Today*, 30.3, September 2007.

focus on advising because of the strong link between advising and student success.

Recommendations

The pressures of the recent pandemic and its aftermath have resulted in an upheaval in college attendance and student persistence rates. We highly commend the efforts of each campus to address the significant challenges of the past few years even while continuing to engage with initiatives that enhance student engagement, persistence and graduation.

Idaho's partnership with Complete College America has been critically important for setting statewide goals and implementing research-based strategies that have led to improvements (sometimes significant) in retention, persistence, and degree completion across all institutions. Now that the original Game Changers and even most of the strategies in the updated CCA Strategy Framework have been embraced – so much so that many of them are infused into institutional strategic plans – future steps can continue to foster this success. Currently, we have an opportunity to reflect and refocus on college completion efforts that will have a meaningful impact on Idahoans. In that spirit, we offer recommendations in the following areas:

Celebrate, Maintain, and Strengthen Commitments to CCA Game Changers:

1. The institutions should be encouraged to review, maintain, and deepen their commitment to the original and newly revised CCA [Game Changers](#). These eighteen strategies have largely been integrated at each campus; some will be differently applicable, and each institution should review and prioritize these evidence-based practices in a context-specific way.
2. Too many Idaho students continue to be required to take pre-general education mathematics courses. The Board should direct OSBE Staff to gather national recommendations, meet with stakeholders, and revise Policy III.S to more accurately reflect current best practices around general education math. Many states have completely eliminated remedial/non-general education math offerings because students are more successful in corequisite models, and our policy can respond to Idaho's context while also reflecting national best practices.

Increase Transfer-Friendly Programs and Policies:

3. The Board should incentivize and celebrate any programs and initiatives designed to facilitate student transfer to and from institutions. The institutions can, with some resources, scale and systematize community college-university degree partnerships. These most often take the form of 2+2 agreements and joint degrees; many options are now possible due to the Joint/Co-Enrollment MOU that has recently been established. This MOU, which enables students to move more fluidly among institutions, has the potential to have an outsized positive impact on the college completion rates for first-generation, Pell-eligible, and rural Idahoans.

Revise General Education Framework:

4. The Board should direct OSBE Staff to conduct a comprehensive review of Idaho's current general education framework and create a plan for its next iteration. Idaho has strong faculty leadership in general education across the state, and there is an opportunity to lead in creating a vision for general education that emphasizes the habits of mind, critical thinking experiences, and durable skills that are fostered in these foundational courses.

Create Purposeful Reporting:

5. Institutions should work with Board staff to determine appropriate reporting and accountability for these efforts.